

## Tour Groups

### *Information and Procedures*

#### General Information

Upon arrival, stop at the information desk to schedule a group orientation with a ranger. The orientation will assist your group in choosing cave tour options, safety considerations, and proper cave etiquette. This orientation is essential to a successful visit and no one enters the cave without it.

The Big Room and Natural Entrance are separate self-guided routes that may be started any time during the hours listed on the back of this brochure. Audio guide rentals are available for additional information on the self-guided tour routes. We recommend a light jacket or sweater and sturdy,

rubber-soled shoes. Strollers are not permitted in the cave; child-carrying backpacks are recommended. Rangers are stationed throughout the cave to assist you during your visit.

#### **Park Rules and Regulations**

Stay on paved trails for your own safety and to protect the cave. Touching, tapping, breaking, or collecting cave formations is strictly prohibited. The use of tobacco in any form is not permitted. All food items and/or beverages, except water, must be consumed on the surface in the coffee shop or in the underground rest area—not on cave trails.

#### Tour Group Escorts

Please call the park at (505) 785-2232 extension 0, at least 24 hours before arriving. We need to know the size of your group and your estimated time of arrival. This information will allow us to move your group through the orientation process more quickly.

When your group arrives, check in at the information desk. A park ranger or cashier will assist with ticket sales, individual passes, group orientation, and answer any questions. Payment options for tour groups include: Visa, MasterCard, Traveler's Checks, company checks, or cash. If payment is made by check, a tax identification number will be required. Make the check payable

to the National Park Service for the exact amount. The tour escort must collect each Golden Age and Golden Access card and present them to the cashier to ensure a discount for each cardholder will be received.

Please make sure your group knows that food and drinks are available in the visitor center complex at the coffee shop and in the underground rest area at the base of the elevators. Restrooms are available in the underground rest area.

#### Loading and Unloading Procedures

Park your bus in the designated bus and recreational vehicle parking area located near the visitor center. During summer bat flight programs drivers are permitted to load and unload passengers in the bat flight area; however, parking there is not permitted.

When your tour group enters the visitor center please keep everyone together in one group, preferably single-file. This will help to avoid unnecessary congestion in the building and your group will enter the cavern more quickly.

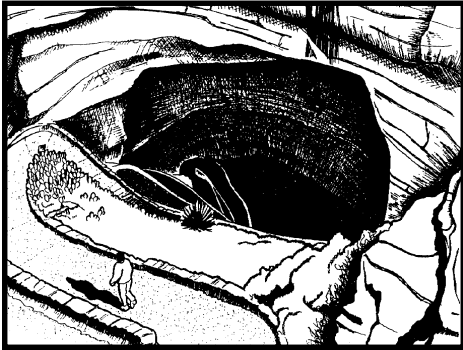
Natural Entrance  
Self-Guided Route

The Natural Entrance Route is a dramatic and exciting way to enter the cave and should not be missed if you have the time and are physically able.

This one-mile, one-hour, self-guided walk is strenuous, and not recommended for anyone with walking or breathing difficulties, or heart problems.

The trail is paved with a non-skid surface; stainless steel handrails and benches are found along the way. However, do not underestimate the difficulty of this tour route. You will descend over 750 feet in elevation on a steep and narrow switchback trail.

At the end of the Natural Entrance route return to the visitor center by elevator, take a break in the underground rest area, or continue on to the Big Room.



Big Room Self-Guided Route



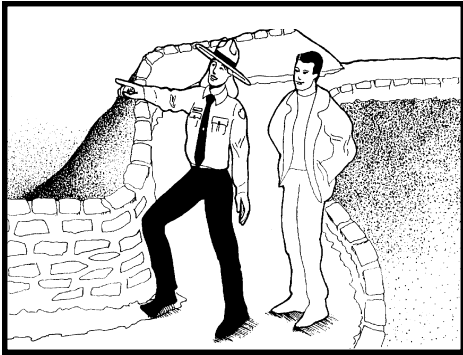
The Big Room, a spacious chamber the size of fourteen football fields, is the “must see” tour for all cavern visitors. If you only have time for one tour, choose this one.

The trail is considered easy because it is mostly level and paved with a non-skid surface. Stainless steel handrails and benches have been installed throughout the Big Room.

This one-mile, self-guided walk of one to one-and-a-half hours may be accessed by the elevator or by walking the Natural Entrance route. The Big Room route is partially accessible to

people using wheelchairs, with assistance. Please ask for an access map and guide at the information desk.

Restrooms, water fountains, and snacks are available in the underground rest area.



Park Hours & Fees

Summer hours are in effect Memorial Day weekend through the third Sunday in August. The rest of the year is considered to be off-season. The park is open daily, except December 25th. Arrive early for maximum time in the cavern.

Summer Hours

Visitor Center	opens	8:00 A.M.
Big Room Self-Guided Route	opens	8:30 A.M.
Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route	opens	8:30 A.M.
Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route	last entry	3:30 P.M.
Big Room Self-Guided Route	last entry	5:00 P.M.
Visitor Center	closes	7:00 P.M.

Off-Season Hours

Visitor Center	opens	8:00 A.M.
Big Room Self-Guided Route	opens	8:30 A.M.
Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route	opens	8:30 A.M.
Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route	closes	2:00 P.M.
Big Room Self-Guided Route	closes	3:30 P.M.
Visitor Center	closes	5:30 P.M.

Audio Guides

The cdrom audio guides are available to rent for the self-guided tours and cost an additional \$3.00 per person.

Golden Age, Golden Access, and Golden Eagle cards

Carlsbad Caverns is a user-fee park, not an entrance fee park. That means we charge individually for entrance fees. Therefore, Golden Age and Golden Access cardholders are entitled to a fifty percent discount for the cardholder only. Golden Eagle passports are not applicable.

Cave Entry Fees

Adults	—ages 16 and over	\$6.00
	—with Golden Access Passport	\$3.00
	—with Golden Age Passport	\$3.00
Children	—ages 6 through 15	\$3.00
	—age 5 and under	free

